

# University of St.Gallen boosts MBA student engagement using premium content

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## The challenge

St.Gallen wanted to engage MBA students more effectively with global current events and macro-economic issues, in an online setting using social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

## The solution

An FT Group Subscription enables professors to annotate articles and stream them directly to students via multiple social media platforms.

## The benefits

FT.com saves professors' time and encourages students to be more involved in class discussion, linking theory to real-world examples.



St.Gallen has long been recognised as a leading university at the cutting edge of management education and the integration of FT articles as case studies in the MBA assessment week is an excellent example of the way that St.Gallen blends academic rigour with the latest economic developments.



**Prof. Thomas Bieger**  
Rector, University of St.Gallen

## International learning experience

The University of St.Gallen in Switzerland is considered one of the leading business schools in Europe. It was the first public university in German-speaking Europe to receive EQUIS accreditation, and it is also AACSB-accredited.

The St.Gallen MBA offers a top-class international experience, with course content drawn from theory and real-world business, an internationally-mobile faculty and a very diverse student body. Its aim is to develop competent, entrepreneurial, globally-oriented and socially responsible managers who can master tomorrow's challenges.

## Information dissemination

The Financial Times newspaper had been delivered to the school for some time. However, it had recently become required course reading, rather than optional. It was therefore more important than ever to ensure

that every student had access to the FT's trusted news, analysis and comment on business developments and challenges worldwide.

In addition, the MBA programme had recently introduced a new element: the Learning Assessment Week (LAW). During this week the students take a 90-minute spoken exam on a range of business and management topics covered during the core subjects of the MBA. Students were given one of a series of in-depth case studies developed from Financial Times articles and were then examined by a panel made up of professors from peer MBA Schools and experts from business. They then received comprehensive feedback assessing their strengths and weaknesses from an employment and academic viewpoint.

The introduction of LAW and the FT-based case studies made it increasingly critical for students to follow business developments closely and to have a deep understanding of the issues. It was therefore essential to increase students' participation in and engagement with FT.com and its unique personalisation tools.



The feedback on the use of FT articles in our Learning Assessment Week has been excellent. It really helped to clarify what the students need to do in the classroom, and they've started reading the FT more regularly because of it. The professors on the panel thought the range of articles was great, and the corporate partners really liked the way that students were focusing on the themes in the news and seeing the big picture.



**Professor Simon Evenett**  
Academic Director, St.Gallen MBA





## Partnering with the FT

With almost 600 journalists around the world, the FT is able to offer an unmatched global perspective on business, finance and politics, providing trusted news, analysis and comment 24 hours a day. Bringing business subjects to life, it enables business school students to connect current events with course principles and gives them current, real-world material for their assignments.

Via an FT Group Subscription, St.Gallen MBA students were given access to this valuable intelligence. “An FT Group Subscription is a great way to disseminate the FT’s excellent business news and insight to all our students,” said Professor Simon Evenett, Academic Director of the St.Gallen MBA programmes. “The FT helps me to steer students towards useful articles, show why they’re important and get students thinking.”

The recent introduction of the Learning Assessment Week has made the FT service even more essential. Sixteen FT articles were turned into case studies, each on a different company, country or macro-economic issue, and students were asked to analyse them to show how well they understood the course content and the topics under discussion. “Every jury member commented on the excellent preparation of the LAW,” said Professor Evenett. “The use and preparation of contemporary materials – in particular, the Financial Times — was seen as particularly valuable.”

LAW panellist David Huber, Senior HR Relationship Manager at HSBC, concurs. “The concept of the Learning Assessment Week and the use of FT articles as case studies are both great ideas as it exposes the students which generates situations that are very close to reality,” he says. “Articles ensure that they do not react upon artificial cases but work on real-life examples. Also, articles are mostly subject to interpretation and therefore allow students to show their flexibility and creativity when engaging them in discussions. It also makes quite obvious a student’s strength and weaknesses.”

## Creating a real-life MBA programme

The FT immerses students in the real world of business and management, offering stimulating coverage of core business issues and the latest trends in management thinking and practice. With St.Gallen’s FT Education licence, its MBA students gained full access to:

- The definitive source of news and analysis of global business, economics, finance and politics.
- Expert analysis of companies’ strategies, tactics takeovers, triumphs and disasters.
- Learning tools such as clippings, email briefings, plus the FT’s searchable 7-year archive for quick and easy research.
- Special in-depth reports on topics from corporate governance and risk management to doing business in specific countries.
- Dedicated FT.com sections on relevant areas such as international business, economics and bricks.
- A wide range of digital features, from video interviews to interactive blogs, financial data and mobile/tablet access.



The Learning Assessment Week’s use of FT case studies provided the chance to calibrate assessment and quality aspects of MBA recruiting for Credit Suisse. This was an opportunity to touch base with highly impressive people on the judging panel for networking and to share views on complex cases studies. This was a very good mix between theoretical and practical approach.



**Roger Schläpfer**  
Strategic Recruiting, Credit Suisse

## Boosting engagement with social media

Professor Evenett wanted to encourage students to be more involved with FT.com and its tools so that they would make full use of it. He set up a Twitter account which was linked to the university's Facebook page, its website and its student blogs, and also to the Professor's own LinkedIn page. After annotating an article he tweets about it, and these tweets are automatically fed into the other social media.

St.Gallen plans to increase student engagement further by grouping articles according to their relevant course, making it quick and easy for students and staff to find what they need.

## Unbeatable career preparation

The FT's global perspective and unrivalled insight into business gives students a real advantage in their

classwork, coursework and exams. But it also gives them a head start in the real world of global business, providing the experience and insight they need to navigate cross-cultural working environments and to shine in job interviews. During Learning Assessment Week, St.Gallen uses FT content to help students transfer the theories they have learned to an applied, integrative general management approach, giving them a more in-depth preparation for a successful entry into the business world.

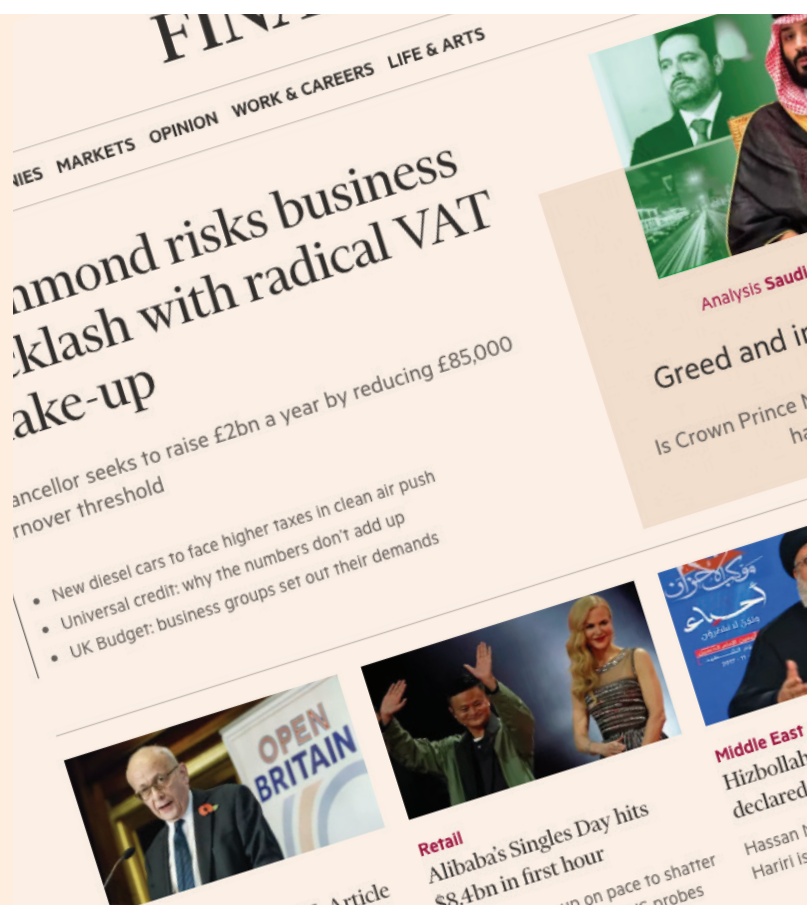
As MBA student Elitsa Slaneva says, "I have always been a devoted FT reader due to its global and multi-industry perspective. Professor Evenett's decision to integrate it into the curriculum here at the HSG-MBA has allowed me to more clearly see the link between theory and practice. Furthermore, this new initiative has taught me to seek interconnectedness among different disciplines – strategy, finance, operations, marketing – when making business decisions.



There was not a day that went by prior to Learning Assessment Week that every student in the class was not deeply engrossed in world developments chronicled in the Financial Times. The students organized small discussion groups on what was in the FT that day, and during coffee breaks everyone was glued to the newspaper. I think this should be a mandatory assessment for all MBAs graduating from programs around the world.



**Tuuli Laakso**  
MBA Student





## About the Financial Times

An FT Group Subscription offers a practical way for academic staff to bring current affairs and an international perspective into their curriculum. Learning tools such as myFT, the weekly business school newsletter, clippings, and email alerts make it easy to incorporate the FT into their teaching.

Professors and students around the world now access our journalism via FT.com, mobile phones and tablets.

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